

SADO Basics, 2015

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The State Appellate Defender Office (SADO) is a judicial branch agency

- SADO is overseen by an independent commission appointed by the Governor.
- SADO was created in 1969 by a Michigan Supreme Court grant.
- SADO was funded by the State of Michigan in 1978, through the statutory mandate of MCL 780.712 et seq, to handle no less than 25% of the assigned criminal appellate caseload statewide.
- SADO client services are rooted in the state constitutional guarantee of counsel on appeal.
- SADO is compliant with the American Bar Association's Ten Principles for an Effective Defense Delivery System.
- SADO offers the defense counterpart to appellate prosecution services provided statewide by the Michigan Attorney General.

SADO represents indigent appellants

- SADO staff attorneys review trial court proceedings to determine whether appellate relief is appropriate: focus is on whether the proceedings were fair, whether counsel functioned effectively, whether the proven facts supported the conviction(s), and whether the sentence was accurate and individualized.
- SADO's full-time appellate defenders are trained, supervised, and successful at correcting errors that occurred in guilty pleas, jury or bench trials, and sentencing.
- Outcomes for SADO clients reflect justice; errors are corrected, innocent defendants are exonerated, identification of actual perpetrators is encouraged.
- In 2014, SADO's percentage of the statewide caseload will reach the statutory floor of 25%.
- Assignment of cases to SADO saves money for Michigan counties, which must otherwise pay for appellate services provided by private assigned counsel.

SADO supports the criminal defense bar

- The functional equivalent of the Prosecuting Attorneys Coordinating Council, SADO's Criminal Defense Resource Center (CDRC) provides support services and training to criminal defense attorneys taking criminal assignments.
- The need for support and training is considerable in the absence of a coordinated defense delivery system at the trial court level. Counties independently fund and operate defense services, resulting in a system generally considered to be constitutionally defective.
- The CDRC provides training and administers statewide training grants, partnering with the Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan, Wayne County's Criminal Advocacy Program, and others.
- An award-winning web site, www.sado.org, provides assigned counsel with manuals, pleadings, databases, training videos, and tools needed to provide effective defense representation.

SADO provides taxpayers with excellent return on investment

- SADO's sentencing advocacy and error correction regularly reduces prison costs of over \$5 million each year, averaging over \$300,000 per staff attorney.
- SADO's data-driven management measures and monitors performance, ensuring accountability and best outcomes.
- SADO pursues federal grant funding for innovative projects, such as social worker sentencing, Detroit Police Crime Lab and Sexual Assault Evidence cleanup, and wrongful prosecution relief.
- SADO collaborates with system stakeholders to seek cost-effective solutions, and improve the quality of justice in Michigan.